

I respectfully oppose this bill because it conflicts with the protections guaranteed by the First Amendment. The First Amendment reflects the foundational principles upon which the United States was established. It safeguards our freedom to express our beliefs, to think independently without government coercion, and to associate freely with others. These liberties are central to a free and democratic society.

The government should not condition nonprofit status in a manner that pressures organizations to restrict or control the ideas they express. I oppose this bill because it seeks to do precisely that. By granting the State of Maryland the authority to impose fines and potentially revoke Maryland income tax, sales tax, and property tax exemptions for churches, parsonages, and religious schools based on speech concerning candidates and elections — which many regard as a God-given liberty — the State risks suppressing political and religious expression.

Such measures would infringe upon constitutionally protected freedoms of religious and political expression. As a Korean American, I am especially mindful of the importance of safeguarding these freedoms. In some countries, individuals, including religious leaders, have faced punishment for expressing political views. I have always been proud to live in the United States, where our constitutional system is designed to prevent government overreach and protect freedom of conscience and speech.

We should remain vigilant in preserving these protections. This bill sets a troubling precedent, risks undermining the foundations of our freedoms, and may punish churches for exercising rights protected by the Constitution.

For these reasons, I respectfully and strongly oppose this bill.